

By: Senator(s) Parks, Sparks

To: Rules

## SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 53

1 A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE CENTENNIAL (100TH) ANNIVERSARY  
2 CELEBRATION OF THE COLISEUM THEATRE IN CORINTH, MISSISSIPPI.

3 WHEREAS, we join the citizens of Corinth, Mississippi, in  
4 celebrating the Centennial (100th) Anniversary of the  
5 establishment of the Coliseum Theatre, which is a historic theater  
6 in Corinth, Mississippi, and is a Mississippi Landmark designed by  
7 Benjamin F. Liddon; and

8 WHEREAS, constructed in 1924, the Coliseum Theatre stands as  
9 the largest theater edifice in North Mississippi. Originally  
10 established as a dual-purpose venue for vaudeville performances  
11 and motion pictures, it transitioned exclusively to a cinema  
12 during the mid-1970s. Subsequently, the City of Corinth undertook  
13 a restoration project to return the Coliseum to its initial  
14 grandeur; and

15 WHEREAS, with an intricately adorned interior featuring  
16 plaster molding, wall motifs, and accented marble wainscoting, the  
17 auditorium also boasts a sizable stained glass fixture that casts  
18 a warm, incandescent glow. Exhibiting Colonial Revival



19 architecture, the exterior showcases a meticulously restored  
20 marquee and a vertical sign. In 1980, the Coliseum Theatre was  
21 recognized for its historical significance, and rightfully earned  
22 a spot on the National Register of Historic Places; and

23 WHEREAS, the Coliseum Theatre has been and remains today the  
24 most impressive and monumental theatre space in Corinth,  
25 Mississippi. Seating 1,000 people on its main floor, mezzanine,  
26 and two-tiered balcony, the Coliseum is discreetly cosmopolitan in  
27 structure in a small-town grid. Strikingly, the asymmetrically  
28 front facade is accented by a two-story, three-centered entry arch  
29 and two smaller arched entries, one three-centered and the other  
30 semi-circular. The two frontal bays are defined by quion  
31 pilasters with entry being through the smaller right-hand bay.  
32 The floor pattern is an ell-shaped plan as the theater occupies  
33 approximately one-third of a city block. The building varies in  
34 height through eleven irregular spaced bays defined by plain brick  
35 pilasters. Constructed of brick in a Flemish bond, two shades of  
36 masonry are used to show separation between the entry pavilion and  
37 the auditorium, the former being of blonde brick and the latter  
38 being a darker brick. Windows on the second story of the front  
39 facade are of an undistinguished casement variety painted to match  
40 the brick. Overall, the Coliseum makes a generous urban gesture.  
41 The theatre respects the existing buildings while quietly  
42 declaring its own special nature; and



43 WHEREAS, the building is certainly worthy of recognition and  
44 preservation for historical reasons, as well as, for present day  
45 needs for the cultural, economic and educational development in  
46 the area. It also serves as a focal point for the current  
47 downtown revitalization program. There is not an auditorium of  
48 this quality in a 50-mile radius that will seat 999 people. Local  
49 concert, school, dance, civic, religious and theatre organizations  
50 use the facilities for their programs. Plans for adaptive use of  
51 the Coliseum Theatre, in addition to the original purposes, are to  
52 use it as an auditorium for lectures and special educational films  
53 for Corinth and Alcorn County Schools, small convention programs,  
54 Northeast Mississippi Museum lectures and Corinth Ministerial  
55 Association Community church services; and

56 WHEREAS, the Coliseum Theatre was designed and built by local  
57 architect, Benjamin Franklin Liddon, the grandson of a Corinth  
58 area pioneer, was a leader in cultural, educational and  
59 recreational development in Northeast Mississippi. He designed  
60 and constructed several notable buildings in Corinth during the  
61 early part of this century. Many traveling shows played the  
62 Coliseum in old vaudeville days. Several famous people played  
63 there, including the Dick Van Dyke show and later, Grand Ole Opry  
64 stars Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, and cowboy comic Smiley  
65 Burnett performed there. In silent screen days, the theatre was  
66 equipped with a theatre organ in the full orchestra pit. The  
67 theatre remained in possession of Mr. Liddon's family after his



68 death and was successfully operated as a movie theatre until 1957.  
69 Then, his grandson, Alan Simmons, continued to run weekend and  
70 special films until the theatre's closing in 1977; and

71 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we honor the rich  
72 cultural heritage of our state and the historical significance of  
73 this North Mississippi architectural icon:

74 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
75 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby recognize the Centennial (100th)  
76 Anniversary celebration of the Corinth Coliseum Theatre in  
77 Corinth, Mississippi, and extend our congratulations to the  
78 citizens of Northeast Mississippi on this landmark event.

79 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to  
80 the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of Corinth, the Alcorn County  
81 Tourism Committee and representatives of the Coliseum Theatre  
82 Centennial Celebration and the Board of Trustees of the Department  
83 of Archives and History and made available to the Capitol Press  
84 Corps.

